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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/712,168	11/12/2003	James Mac Freitag	HITG.044PA(0552)	8244

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EXAMINER

CAO, ALLEN T

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
2627	

DATE MAILED: 10/24/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/712,168

Applicant(s)

FREITAG ET AL.

Examiner

Allen T. Cao

Art Unit

2627

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 17 August 2006.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-17 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-17 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

1. Applicant's response filed on 8/17/06 of the finality of the rejection of the last Office action is persuasive and, therefore, the finality of that action is withdrawn.

2. Claims 13-15 are objected to because of the following informalities:

a) The term "seedlayer" in claims 13, line 13 and claim 15, line 11 should be changed to --seed layer--.

b) The phrase "the pinning layer" in claim 15, line 11 should be changed --a pinning layer—for avoiding lacking of antecedent basis.

Appropriate correction is required.

3. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention thereof by the applicant for patent, or on an international application by another who has fulfilled the requirements of paragraphs (1), (2), and (4) of section 371(c) of this title before the invention thereof by the applicant for patent.

The changes made to 35 U.S.C. 102(e) by the American Inventors Protection Act of 1999 (AIPA) and the Intellectual Property and High Technology Technical Amendments Act of 2002 do not apply when the reference is a U.S. patent resulting directly or indirectly from an international application filed before November 29, 2000. Therefore, the prior art date of the reference is determined under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) prior to the amendment by the AIPA (pre-AIPA 35 U.S.C. 102(e)).

4. Claims 1-3, 5-7 and 11-17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Gill (US. 6,665,155).

Gill discloses a magnetic sensor having a pinned layer 212; a separation layer 202 formed over the pinned layer; a first free layer 220 having a first thickness; and a second free layer (224 or 222) formed over the first free layer, wherein the ratio of the first thickness and the second thickness is selected to provide a desired magnetostriction (see Summary of the invention section and column 8, lines 19-63), as set forth in claims 1, 5, 11, 13 and 17. Gill also discloses an aniferromagnetic pinning layer 213; hard magnetic thin films (141, 144); and a seed layer 226.

Regarding claims 2, 6, 12, 14 and 16, Gill discloses that the first free layer 212 comprises CoFe and the second free layer 224 comprises NiFe.

Regarding claim 3, Gill discloses that the separation is a conductor layer (Cu).

5. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

6. Claims 4 and 9-10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Gill in view of Matsutera et al (US. 7,068,536).

Gill does not disclose that the separation is an insulation layer as recited in claims 4 and 9.

Matsutera et al discloses a magnetic sensor having a pinned layer 6; an insulation tunnel barrier 7 formed on the pinned layer 6; and a first free layer 8a formed on the insulation barrier layer 7; and a second free layer 8c, as claimed in claims 4 and 9.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to manufacture the separation layer of Gill with an insulation material instead of Cu as taught by Matsutera et al.

The rationale is as follows: One of ordinary skill in the art would have been motivated to make the separation layer of Gill with an insulation material instead of Cu as taught by Matsutera et al for detecting the resistance of the magnetic tunnel junction, thus the direction of the free layers can be determined.

Regarding claim 10, Gill discloses that the first free layer 212 comprises CoFe and the second free layer 224 comprises NiFe.

Response to Arguments

7. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1-17 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

8. This is a NON-FINAL Office Action.

9. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Allen T. Cao whose telephone number is (571) 272-7569. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon - Thurs (7:30 - 6:00).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Hoa T. Nguyen can be reached on (571) 272-7579. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.



Allen Cao
Primary Examiner

AC
October 20, 2006